

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION ANSWER KEY

Language

Language is a barrier to effective communication. The vocabulary of both the individual communicating a problem and the individual listening to the problem can be problematic. Also, when discussing your solution to a customer's problem, be sure not to use jargon, especially not jargon internal to your company (i.e. "Go to the bank and speak to the CSR" should be "Go to the bank and speak to a customer service representative"). Finally, make sure that there is no ambiguity, rambling or double meanings in your communications with your customers.

Psychology

Individual personalities are also barriers to effective communication. Emotion (fear, shyness, aggression) and frame of reference (bias, prejudice, experiences, and assumptions) shape communications. In addition, the current mood and life pressures on both the individual with a problem and the individual who is listening to the problem impact communication.

Business

Communication is also impacted by the policies, systems and structure within the company for which you work. For example, customers that experience long telephone wait times (due to insufficient staff) will have a different attitude on the phone than customers who waited a very short time on the telephone before their calls were answered.

Situation/Topic

The environment in which you work and the surrounding circumstances may also be barriers to effective communication. For example, the time of day when a call is answered could be a factor in communications (i.e. during a hectic lunch hour). Also the temperature in the room, the noise volume in the room and the number of intrusions and interruptions can impact communication.

Communicator's Weakness

The customer who is informing you about his/her problem may have some communication shortcomings. They may:

- use an inappropriate tone or approach
- be unable to use communication skills adequately
- lack sufficient knowledge to communicate their problem effectively
- be a poor listener
- have a predetermined solution to the problem that is not a realistic solution

Receiver's Weakness

The customer service representative who is listening to a customer's problem may have some communication shortcomings. They may:

- be reluctant to receive information
- not be paying attention to the customer
- be unfamiliar with the content or subject matter
- be unprepared to handle customer calls